

Each year thousands of pedestrians are killed nationwide. Tens of thousands more are injured. The number of pedestrian fatalities and injuries here in Council Bluffs are just a small portion of those nationwide, but occur more often than we would like, and with increasing frequency.

Most pedestrian accidents occur in the following situations:

- Pedestrians dart out into the street at a mid-block situation;

- Pedestrians dash across an intersection unaware of oncoming traffic;

- Turning vehicles fail to yield the right-of-way;

- Backing vehicles fail to see pedestrians;

To assist you in safely navigating the streets, keep the following in mind: Walk Defensively - Be prepared for the unexpected. Don't let vehicles (cars, trucks, or bikes) surprise you, even if the driver does something wrong.

Walk Facing Oncoming Traffic - It's easier to react to oncoming traffic if you can see it.

Cross Streets at Intersections Whenever Possible - Look in all directions before entering the street. Be alert for turning vehicles, especially those making right turns on a red signal. If there are crosswalks, use them; but, don't assume that you are completely safe in a crosswalk. Don't cross mid-block. Jaywalking is dangerous as vehicles don't expect to encounter a pedestrian, and you no longer have the right-of-way. State Law 32-27-4, requires pedestrians crossing at non-intersection locations to "yield the right-of-way to vehicles".

Be Careful in Parking lots - Pedestrians may have the right-of-way, but many drivers don't wait for pedestrians. In a parking lot, vehicles may move suddenly in any direction, including backwards, requiring pedestrians to be very alert.

Avoid Dangerous Moves - Any movement a pedestrian makes that drivers aren't expecting, could be dangerous. When crossing the street, pause and look all ways before entering the street. Don't step suddenly into traffic from between parked cars since this is a sure way of surprising drivers.

After Dark, Wear Light Colored Clothes - Being visible to drivers means wearing light colored, or white, clothes, carrying a flashlight, and walking in lit areas when possible. In spite of the relatively small percentage of pedestrian travel during darkness, **more than one third of pedestrian accidents occur during dark conditions.**

Teach Children How to be Safe Pedestrians - A disproportionate number of children are involved in pedestrian accidents. A child is not as visible to drivers as adults and children may not realize the dangers of being in or near the street. Take the time to teach your child all of the above safety measures, and watch to see that they use them.